

“Recycled People!”

1. Intro:

- 1.1. **Show:** Recyclable water bottle; & Starbucks cup.
- 1.2. There is a **growing awareness & increasing efforts** to **Recycle**.
 - 1.2.1. We are doing it with just about any product: **Paper, glass, many metals, auto’s & trucks & machine parts**, even our old **cell phones**
 - 1.2.2. Job sites have had a problem with thieves coming through & stripping commercial buildings of all its **copper**.
 - 1.2.3. We now have what’s called **Urban Quarrying** – One old Airport site produced 5,000 tons of secondary aggregate every day as they tore out old concrete & asphalt to reuse it.
 - 1.2.4. It’s really what **thrift stores & garage sales** are all about.
 - 1.2.5. **Dennis Weaver** (of McCloud fame) built his **“Earthship”** in Colorado. It is an environmentally friendly, 10,000 square foot home made of used tires, aluminum cans, & other recycled materials. I may be made of junk but is for sale for \$3.3 million.
- 1.3. I want to talk about **Recycled People** this morning!
 - 1.3.1. **Not like** the 1973 dystopian science fiction movie **“Soylent Green”**.
 - 1.3.2. **The year 2022**. Water/soil poisoned; airborne pollution; year-round heat wave (from green-house effect).
 - 1.3.3. Robert Thorn (Charlton Heston; NYPD Det.) sought to crack the case.
 - 1.3.4. Soy(bean) lent(il) [**Red & yellow high energy vegetable concentrate**]
 - 1.3.5. Newest product from **Soylent Corp...** **“Soylent Green”**.
 - 1.3.5.1. Marketed as High energy plankton. Much more nutritious, but short supply – leads to riots. Ends up being made of cadavers!
 - 1.3.6. **Ok, so not that kind of Recycled People!**
- 1.4. **Recycle** = To adapt or convert something to a **new use**.
- 1.5. **God is a master at recycling & reshaping** our lives into **something new!**
 - 1.5.1. God sees the person who exhibits the most **misguided, disreputable, & even disgraceful** behavior as... **Recyclable!**
 - 1.5.2. **As we** see nearly **anything & everything** as being recyclable; **God sees people** as recyclable! [**I guess God is Green!**]
- 1.6. **Saul** would be such a person. He needed to be **reclaimed & recycled**.
 - 1.6.1. **Recap** 9:1-19.
- 1.7. **The Christian Life is both individual & social**.
 - 1.7.1. Good example here with Saul. Having an **individual** relationship with **Christ**; & a **social** relationship with **Christians**.
 - 1.7.1.1. A **changed man** seeks company among other **changed people!**

2. SAUL! (20-31)

- 2.1. **EVANGELISM IN DAMASCUS!** (20-22)
- 2.2. (20) Immediately Saul began to preach in the synagogues, serving the gospel w/all the zeal he used formerly to persecute it. (Shepherds Notes; pg.33)
- 2.3. (21,22) Between vs. 21,22 is **Gal.1:15-19**. [3 yrs in Arabia]
 - 2.3.1. Jesus became **the center** of Saul's readjusted worldview.
 - 2.3.2. Some make Jesus *the cherry on top* of their Sunday. He doesn't want to "**Top off**" you life! He wants to be **the center** of everything.
- 2.4. (22) This enemy of "*The Way*" is not showing the Way...the truth & the life!
- 2.5. **ESCAPE FROM DAMASCUS!** (23-25)
- 2.6. **Large basket** (hamper size) – it was let down from window of house built on wall. Similar to Rahab's house in Jericho built into wall & let 2 spies down through.
- 2.7. **THE RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP!** (26-30)
- 2.8. (26) **Afraid & did not believe** – painful but natural.
 - 2.8.1. They were skeptical of this "**destroyer turn disciple**"; this "**persecutor turn preacher**";
- 2.9. **Jerusalem** - He spent 15 days with Peter & James (Lord's bro) (Gal.1:18,19)
 - 2.9.1. It was there & then he received his commission as Apostle to the Gentiles – **See 22:17-21**.
- 2.10. (27) **People** are instrumental in the recycling of **products**. **People** are instrumental in the recycling of **persons**.
 - 2.10.1. Like **Ananias** who was once a **reluctant recycler** (9:13,14).
 - 2.10.1.1. Just as we sometimes **don't** bend over to pick up the penny, or lift the plastic bottle out of the trashcan, because we don't think its **worth it**.
 - 2.10.1.2. Same with some people. Sometimes we wonder "is it really worth the effort to pick them up".
 - 2.10.2. Now **Barnabas** is used in this process.
 - 2.10.2.1. **Barnabas vouches for Saul's sincerity & effectiveness in Damascus**. [**Qualifications**: Saul had **seen** the Lord; **spoke** to Him; & **spoken boldly** in His Name.]
 - 2.10.3. **I like the signs that say, "WE BUY UGLY HOUSES!"**
 - 2.10.3.1. **What are those entrepreneurs saying?** – We'll buy your shabby run down house for pennies on the dollar, fix it up, & flip it for a handsome profit.
 - 2.10.3.2. **What you see as far-too-gone to save, they see promise in every ugly house!**

- 2.11. (30) For his own safety they took him to the port city **Caesarea** & put him on a boat for **home**. **Tarsus** his own city(22:3)
 2.11.1. Wonder what they thought of this change in his home town?
- 2.12. **CHURCH GROWTH!** (31)
- 2.13. When it's God that moves us, it is best for **us** for where we're going, & for **those** who we leave behind.
 2.13.1. They grew **Upward** toward **God** in edification;
 They grew **Outward** toward **men** in multiplication.
- 2.14. **Walking** – I love that it says that they were walking (action; movement; momentum)
 2.14.1. This is part of a young child's normal development.
- 2.15. **What 4 things caused growth in these churches throughout this region?**
 2.15.1. [1] **Peaceful church**(peace) [2] **Pure church**(fear of Lord)
 [3] **Powerful church**(edify/strengthen) [4] **Progressive church**(walking)
- 2.16. With Saul now home in Tarsus, the narrative focuses once more with **Peter**.
 2.16.1. After recording the experiences of Stephen, Philip, & Saul.

3. **PETER! (32-43)**

- 3.1. **AENEAS!** (32-35)
- 3.2. Peter evangelizes the coastal cities.
- 3.3. He stopped at Lydda to **visit believers** there.
 3.3.1. **Lydda** = district capital of Samaria during NT era. (Lod in OT)
- 3.4. (34) Peter lays emphasis on fact **Christ Himself is healer!** (humility)
 3.4.1. Let us hide ourselves behind our Lord.
 3.4.2. Maclaren, "The herald is not to blow his own name or praises through his trumpet, but his King's; & be forgotten when the royal progress has come."
 3.4.2.1. All eyes are on the musician at a wedding...**till** the bride enters.
Then most even turn there back completely on the musician.
- 3.5. Mothers, a great plaque for your kid's room! "**Arise & make your bed**"
 3.5.1. **Make your bed** = roll up your mat, on which he slept for 8 years.
 3.5.2. **Immediately doing for himself at last what others must have done for him all that time.** [Jesus did same thing in Mark 2:1-12]
- 3.6. **TABITHA!** (36-43)
- 3.7. **Joppa** (Jaffa) – main port city of Judea.
- 3.8. **The Deeds of Dorcas!** (36)
- 3.9. **Tabitha** (the Jews would know her by). Luke provides his Greek readers with her name in Greek **Dorcas**. **Gazelle** in Aramaic.
- 3.10. **Which she did** - She didn't just talk about doing!
 3.10.1. A lovely soul **gathered love by giving love!** *Griffith Thomas*

3.11. **The Death of Dorcas!** (37)

3.12. She became **ill** & **died** in the midst of **usefulness** & **influence**...often so!

3.13. **The Deliverance of Dorcas!** (38-43)

3.14. (38) This was a 3 hour journey by foot for Peter.

3.15. (39) **Widows** – another instance of care of widows by Christian Church.

3.16. Showing – (Gk.) Showing as they wore them.

3.16.1. We all treasure mementos of our deceased loved ones.

3.16.2. **But do we express appreciation to the living?**

It isn't the thing you do, It's the thing you leave undone,

Which gives you a bit of heartache At the setting of the sun.

The tender word forgotten, the letter you did not write,

The flower you might have sent, Are you haunting ghosts tonight.¹

3.17. (40) **Knelt down & prayed** – fully aware that healing would **not** come from **him**, but only through the power of **Christ**.

3.18. **Tabitha Arise** – Just like his Master had done at house of Jarius'.

3.18.1. **"Talitha cumi, Little girl, I say to you, arise"** Mark5:41

3.19. (42) **Many believed on the Lord** – All the results are to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself! **We find Jesus...**

3.19.1. We find Jesus in the **Home** of **Aeneas!**

3.19.2. We find Jesus in the **Heart** of **Dorcas!**

3.19.3. We find Jesus in the **Hope** of the **Disciples!**

3.19.4. We find Jesus in the **Hand** of **Peter!**

3.19.5. We find Jesus in the **Harvest** of **Converts!**

3.20. (43) **Why does Luke discuss Peter at this point?**

3.20.1. **Joppa** - This city reminds us at once of the prophet **Jonah**, who went down to Joppa to flee to Tarshish instead of minister to the Gentiles.

3.20.2. As God called **Jonah** to carry His message to the **Gentiles**;
God was about to call **Peter** to do the same thing (Acts 10).

3.20.3. So this is an **important segue** leading up to the official entrance of the **Gentiles** into the Christian Church (ch.10 w/Cornelius).

3.21. **God sees people as what the may be!** (like 9:15)

3.22. **God is the browser** in an **old estate auction** who happens upon the **rickety old rocking chair** with broken rungs, six cracked and caked coats of black enamel, and assorted springs pushing out through what was once a seat cushion.

3.22.1. God sees the rocker **stripped** of the layers of paint. God sees **new supports**. God sees a **fine leather seat**. God sees a beautifully refinished oak rocker refitted to rock children to sleep for yrs to come.

¹ Griffith Thomas; pg.182.

- 3.23. Remember the story of the Potter and the Clay as told in **Jeremiah 18:2-6**.
- 3.23.1. The story says, “The jar did not turn out as he had hoped, so the potter squashed the jar into a lump of clay and started over again” (4)
- 3.23.2. God is a master at recycling lives and reshaping them into something good and useful. We would do well to see...
- 3.23.2.1. See ourselves and others as ***Recyclable!***
- 3.23.2.2. See ourselves as ***Recyclers!***
- 3.24. There is no one of **too little worth** or **too far gone** to be **reclaimed** and **recycled** for the glory of God and the good of others!